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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 ANTANANARIVO 000515

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/EPS AND AF/E - MBEYZEROV

USDOC FOR BECKY ERKUL - DESK OFFICER

TREASURY FOR FBOYE

STATE PLEASE PASS USTR - WJACKSON

USAU FOR JOEL MAYBURY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/03/2019

TAGS: PGOV PREL MA

SUBJECT: MADAGASCAR: CHISSANO STAKES STOCK

Classified By: P/E CHIEF DOVIE HOLLAND FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D.

¶1. (C) Summary: During his July 9-12 visit to Madagascar, SADC mediator Chissano solicited advice from the dip corps then met with transition authority (HAT) president Andry Rajoelina July 10, followed by weekend meetings with the delegations of the other three movements (Zafy, Ratsiraka, Ravalomanana), civil society representatives, and traditional leaders. He departed for New York July 12, stopping en route to meet with ousted President Ravalomanana in South Africa. Rajoelina and the three delegations all indicated their willingness to resume negotiations which had been officially suspended since June 15. Chissano plans to see exiled former President Ratsiraka July 19 in Paris. SADC Special Envoy Dlamini will participate in an AU meeting of envoys in Addis July 21, and Chissano will join him the 22nd for the second ICG consultative group meeting there. Tensions over who -- the AU or SADC? -- is leading this mediation are rising. Most of the diplomats who spoke during the July 10 meeting expressed concern regarding the HAT's proposed plan to move forward to elections unilaterally prior to achieving a consensual political agreement with the other main political factions -- a problematic outcome confirmed by TGV in an interview broadcast later on Friday to the nation. Such concerns were reiterated to the Swedish Ambassador Lena Sundh, who arrived in Madagascar July 12 for a four-day fact-finding mission on the political situation following Sweden's assumption of the EU presidency July 1. Pro-Ravalomanana/TIM representatives raised the same concern with the Ambassador July 13, and requested the international community's help reigning in the HAT and promoting a prompt return to the negotiating table. End summary.

Chissano Meets the Players

¶2. (C) SADC mediator, and former Mozambican President, Joaquim Chissano, accompanied by former Swazi Prime Minister Themba Dlamini, former Mozambican Foreign Minister Leonardo Simao, and former South African Defense Minister Charles Ngakula, convoked a meeting of the diplomatic corps July 10 to explain his mission to Madagascar and solicit the recommendations of local diplomats. The SADC mediation team arrived in Madagascar July 9 for a three day visit, during which it met with transition authority president Andry Rajoelina; the delegations of President Ravalomanana, former President Zafy Albert, and former President Ratsiraka; the French and American Ambassadors; various civil society representatives; Catholic Archbishop Odon; and traditional Malagasy leaders. Following his departure from Madagascar

July 12, Chissano met with President Ravalomanana in South Africa before traveling on to New York. Chissano will see exiled former President Ratsiraka, along with the International Francophonie Organization (OIF) and the French government, July 19 in Paris. Dlamini will attend a July 21 meeting of special envoys in Addis July 21, and Chissano will join him there for the second consultative meeting of the international contact group July 22.

¶13. (C) Chissano explained that he had been appointed by SADC June 20 as a mediator in the current political crisis to seek to bring together the various viewpoints to create a lasting peace and reconciliation. He plans to coordinate with the AU, UN, and OIF to carry out this mission. He did not respond clearly to the question of which organization would take the lead role, but the South African Ambassador indicated that it would be SADC. This question will be addressed and, hopefully, definitively resolved at the special envoy meeting in Addis July 21. (UN mediator Drame told the Ambassador today by phone from Bamako that the AU is unwilling to cede the lead to SADC. He confirmed that AU mediator Ablasse Ouedraogo had unilaterally convoked the heads of the four main movements to Addis, either to attend the ICG or to participate in side meetings -- a move he disagreed with but was powerless to stop.)

International Community Views: Generally in Agreement

¶14. (C) UN Coordinator Xavier Leus said that the UN received a request from the HAT to send a team of experts to assess the country's capacity for organizing elections, which the UN was

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currently reviewing. Most countries, with the exception of France, seemed to be in favor of holding off on providing electoral support, even technical analysis, until a consensus was reached. EU Ambassador Jean Claude Boidin noted that the EU had received a similar request but would not respond due to the HAT's failure in discussions in Brussels July 6-7 to present a roadmap leading to consensual, fair elections. He explained that the EU had clearly stated to Rajoelina that an inclusive political agreement must be reached for the EU to continue its assistance to Madagascar, and added that the international contact group had agreed that a comprehensive political agreement was a prerequisite to the organization of elections. He further noted that Malagasy political parties were based on their leaders rather than platforms so it was important that SADC meet with the leaders and not only their delegations, and thus recommended moving the negotiations to another country to accommodate the two exiled presidents. The South African Ambassador confirmed in a subsequent meeting that the delegations had agreed to move the talks to either Mauritius (preferred by TGV and Zafy) or Angola (preferred by Ravalomanana); Drame told the Ambassador that Ratsiraka is unwilling to attend talks held anywhere in SADC. The German Ambassador added that Ravalomanana must be a part of the agreement, or a lasting peace could not be achieved and suggested that an amnesty be given to him and Ratsiraka and a truth and reconciliation commission set up.

¶15. (C) The French DCM noted that some donors had suspended budget support for the Ravalomanana administration in December 2008 due to the ousted president's abuses of power, and raised the question of whether or not all participants in the negotiations should be placed on an equal pedestal, implying that Rajoelina should be given a higher position. She suggested that a deadline for negotiations and elections be imposed, and that the negotiations not focus on former heads of state (i.e., Ravalomanana and Ratsiraka who "took the negotiations hostage") but on problem solving, to avoid further economic deterioration. The French Ambassador subsequently intervened somewhat contrarily (perhaps indicative of the apparent divide in French policy) to say that achieving a consensus prior to elections was more important than the election timetable, and that the HAT should be discouraged by everyone from moving unilaterally to

elections at this time. He suggested that the election timeframe could be sped up if the parties focused on agreeing only on the main principles, such as candidate eligibility requirements and electoral code reform, prior to elections and left the other agenda items (unclear what that would be, presumably constitutional reform) to be resolved following elections. He proposed that Rajoelina and the three ex-presidents be pressed to agree not to run for president. Chissano replied that perhaps all four should be able to run, but Rajoelina would have to give up control of the transition, which the French Ambassador viewed as an unlikely scenario.

Swedish Ambassador Pushes for Consensus

¶6. (C) Sweden assumed the EU presidency July 1, but has delegated local leadership on Madagascar to the German embassy here as Sweden does not have a mission on the ground. Swedish Ambassador Lena Sundh, who participated in the EU discussions with the HAT under the Cotonou Agreement in Brussels to determine the future of EU cooperation with the island, is in Madagascar July 12-16 for a fact-finding mission. She will meet with AREMA leader Pierrot Razaonarivelo, TIM, economic actors, generals, and perhaps former President Zafy. She explained to the dip corps July 13 that the EU had given the HAT a strong message during the Brussels meetings that unilateral moves towards elections, without consensus, were unacceptable. She therefore was puzzled by Chissano's assertion, which he expressed in a bilateral meeting with her on Sunday before he left, that the HAT has "misunderstood" the views of the EU and international community and was pressing ahead unilaterally with elections because it thought that was what we wanted. Ambassador Marquardt opined that bad faith, rather than any misunderstanding, was the explanation for the HAT's decision to press forward unilaterally on elections before the end of the year -- a point he also made to Chiassano in their

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meeting. The South African Ambassador said that Chissano had delivered a strong message in his July 10 meeting with Rajoelina on the need for consensus and the dangers of a unilateral approach.

TIM Says Time is Right and Asks for Help

¶7. (C) Pro-Ravalomanana/TIM delegation leaders Fetison Rakotonirina and Meza Razafimihary told the Ambassador July 13 that Chissano had listened to their explanation of events and TIM's position for over two hours. They explained that AU envoy Ouedraogo had invited the four delegations to Addis Ababa for a meeting July 21, but expressed some confusion regarding who will lead the negotiation effort -- SADC or AU.

Although they expressed a willingness to work with the SADC and AU teams, they are increasingly concerned that the HAT is ever-more-deeply entrenching itself in power and will move forward unilaterally with elections -- a move which would not resolve the crisis, but lead to more extremism, they argued. Thus, they said that the time is right to get the four delegations together evenbefore Addis. Fetison was optimistic that an accord could be reached if the talks were held now; he added that TIM was even willing to accept the HAT Prime Minister Monja Roindifo (who is said to have control over the mutinous, coup-backing CAPSAT/FIS forces) retaining his current role. He argued that Ravalomanana should return (not with mercenaries, which they dissuaded him from using) and play a role in the transition, but said that TIM wasn't opposed to Rajoelina running for election, as his lack of popularity would then become apparent. In the meantime, Fetison supports the idea of "offshoring" the negotiations so that Ravalomanana may participate directly, and argued against broadening the talks to include more political actors.

Ambiguous French Role

18. (C) Fetison said that the French ambassador had called him to complain about the TIM leader's critical remarks after the French ambassador had given a speech ("in my personal capacity", he lamely explained later) at a ceremony in which two French military officers were decorated by the HAT Defense Minister. Fetison complained that the French position was opaque, and solicited the Ambassador's advice prior to a meeting with the French ambassador later that same day. The Ambassador said that there seemed to be a divide in Paris, which put the local French ambassador in a difficult position. (Drame had told the Ambassador that he met recently in Paris with Stephane Gompertz of the Quai and Remy Marechaux in the Elysee, both of whom complained to him about the strong role being played by "Francafrique" veterans Robert Bourgi -- who reportedly was in Tana again for the June 26 national day celebration -- and Secretary General of the Elysee Claude Gueant. In addition to the publicly-acknowledged meeting last week between Minister for Cooperation and Francophonie Alain Joyandet and Rajoelina in Paris, there apparently was another held privately between TGV and Gueant. Marechaux and Gompertz expressed their concern to Drame that the advice TGV was receiving from the Francafrique side might be quite different from their own, which is closely in line with that of the remainder of the international community.)

19. (C) Comment: The international community appears on the surface to be in agreement that a political consensus must be obtained prior to the organization of elections if they are to stand a chance of being considered legitimate -- and without which none of us will support the electoral process financially or with our expertise. What exactly a consensus will look like or who will be included remains to be fleshed out, but we will continue to urge that, at a minimum, it must include both Rajoelina and Ravalomanana. With respect to the ambiguous French position, all here complain privately about a striking lack of clarity, and about specific actions by the French here and in Paris which seem to portend -- and/or are presented by the HAT as -- impending recognition of the HAT. It looks to us that the Francafrique side of the house wants TGV to prevail, is unconcerned about their moving ahead unilaterally, and that they are the ones who have TGV's ear. End comment.

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MARQUARDT